

Navy Makes Improvements in Voting Assistance Program

Several changes have been initiated in the Navy's Voting Assistance Program for 2004 to ensure this election year is the smoothest ever for Sailors.

The right to vote is a cherished freedom, as we are reminded daily by the struggles toward democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq. Commanding Officers and VAOs (voting assistance officers) are encouraged to empower their Sailors and families to get out and vote.

In the 2000 election, many military votes did not get counted, as problems existed with absentee ballots, primarily from afloat units not getting postmarked in a timely manner. The Navy is addressing that problem by installing postmark cancellation machines on all ships in the fleet.

With the large number of Reservists currently serving on active duty, the Navy is actively reaching out to them. Reservists are absorbed into a unit that is already established. That unit has a VAO that will tell them how they can go about voting using the absentee ballots.

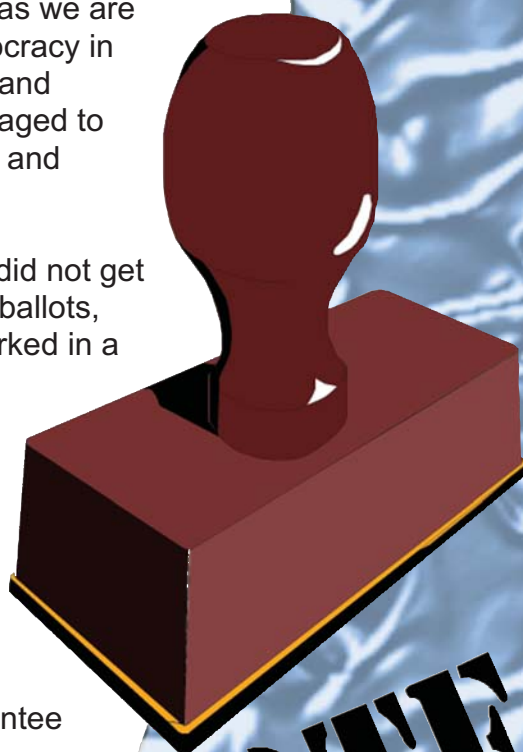
Below is a listing of fleet concentration areas and dates where VAOs will get updates on the Navy's voting initiatives:

March 1-4: San Diego, Calif.
April 19-23: Bremerton, Wash.
May 4-5: Jacksonville, Fla.
May 18-20: Naples, Italy
June 14-18: Yokosuka, Japan
July 6-9: Norfolk, Va.
July 27-30: Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

For more information, contact:

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